

Another mainstream article claiming ataraxia is the goal

Post by “Don” of September 23, 2022 at 8:02 AM

First thoughts:

It may be admissible to describe Epicurus's description of the highest pleasure being the absence of pain as "idiosyncratic" simply because he shifts focus. It would be like describing a full glass of water as the absence of air in the glass. But the *real* import of saying there's not air in the glass is an "idiosyncratic" way of emphasized the point that the glass is completely filled to the rim with water. Your glass is completely filled with no room for any more water. Same with pleasure and pain. You wouldn't order a glass of water by saying "I'd like a glass completely devoid of air" unless you were trying to make some point. I think that's what Epicurus was doing with his absence of pain terminology. A life filled to the rim with pleasure *can be* thought of as a life lived in the absence of pain. It's not some arcane thing like some authors and academics try to make it out to be.

Another first thought:

So many authors and academics completely skip over this line that's right there:

Quote from Cicero's Torquatus

*"For the pleasure which we pursue is ***not that alone*** which excites the natural constitution itself by a kind of sweetness, and of which the sensual enjoyment is attended by a kind of agreeableness, but we look upon the greatest pleasure as that which is enjoyed when all pain is removed."*

Not that alone! So "we pursue" that which excites the natural constitution itself by a kind of sweetness, and of which the sensual enjoyment is attended by a kind of agreeableness, but just not only that. We pursue both x and y.

I maintain that cultivating tranquility is an important component of an Epicurean life, an Epicurean practice, but that is not at the expense of that "which the sensual enjoyment is attended by a kind of agreeableness." It's both.